

Welcoming the Stranger

SERMON NOTES AND STUDY QUESTIONS –FEBRUARY 2, 2020 – ROMANS 15:7

Sermon Notes

1. Modern Cultural Forces that create Inhospitability

- a. The Ideology of _____ - The belief that informal, personal, human relationships of closeness and warmth are life's most important forms of interaction.
- b. Expressive _____ - The belief that the purpose of life is the fullest development of the individual personality, feelings, and experiences through intimate relationships and activities.
- c. The result is that Christian worship becomes seen as a private _____ gathering, rather than a public gathering of strangers for a common purpose.

2. The Problem with seeing Worship as a Family Gathering

- a. People come to see the _____
- b. A family gathering is designed for the _____
- c. The family works to protect the comfort of its relationships.

3. Christian worship is a public event of _____ to the stranger.

- a. _____ is the host of Christian worship, who gives himself.
 - i. Ex 29:46, 1 Kings 8: 28-30; Luke 9:10-17, 12:37, 22,25-26, 22:14-20, 24:30-31
- b. We are all the _____:
 - i. To God - *They are ... alienated from the life of God* (Eph. 4:18)
 - ii. To ourselves - *For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate* (Romans 7:14-15)
 - iii. To one another – *And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, (Col 1:21)*
- c. God hosts us in worship to remind us that our unity is not the product of our personal relationships, but of the peace His gives through _____ (Eph. 2:14-19).
- d. Christ promised to be present in the _____.
 - i. *"...I was a stranger and you welcomed me..."* (Matthew 25:35)
 - ii. *"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."* (Heb. 13:2)

4. God's People are called to _____ the welcome they have received to others.

- a. *Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you.* (Romans 15:7)
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Life Group Discussion Questions

Getting Started

1. Think of a time in your life when you have been a stranger in a gathering and felt unwelcomed. And another when you did feel welcomed among a group of strangers. Share them with your group and discuss what was different in each.
2. What is the difference between a private gathering and a public gathering? Name a few examples that show the differences between something public and private.

Into the Word

1. Essential to a right understanding of worship is knowing its primary purpose: to publicly administrate God's giving of himself as gift. Read Exodus 29:42-46, and 1 Kings 8:22-34. What is the purpose of tabernacle and temple?
 - a. For Israel, animal sacrifices were not payments to God, but purifications that made it possible for Israel to receive the gift of his presence. How did Jesus sacrifice make us able to receive God's gift of himself? (Rom. 3:21-26)
2. Read the Passages from Luke cited in point 3.a.i above. How do they show Jesus as the host who serves?
3. Read Romans 14:13-15:7. What should our attitude towards others be in the public gathering?

Application

1. Why is it difficult to welcome a stranger? Why is it difficult to be a stranger?
2. Meaningful personal relationships, while not the primary purpose of Sunday morning, are still integral to the growth and life of the church. What other parts of our discipleship process are best suited for cultivating deeper relationships? Why?
3. Timothy Keller writes, "If a house church (<40 people) opts to grow out of the house-church size into a small church (40-200), it needs to prepare its people to do this by acknowledging the losses of intimacy, spontaneity, and informality and agreeing to bear these as a cost of mission, opening its ranks to new people." Imagine that fifty visitors show up to worship one Sunday and keep coming back. How will that change the way you experience our worship gathering?
 - a. What is exciting about that possibility? What is scary?